MILK FOR BABES,

OR

A CATECHISM IN VERSE.

"Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me," John v. 39

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ON THE BURNING OF HINDOO WIDOWS.

"THE dark places of the earth," that is, countries not enlightened by the gospel, "are full of the habitations of cruelty," Psa. lxxiv, 20. Every account that we receive from them goes to show that the people live in misery, and die without hope. Perhaps one of the most horrid practices in heathenism is that of widows burning themselves with the dead bodies of their husbands: and why do they do this? Because their false religion teaches them so. The Rev. J. Peggs, who was a missionary at Cuttack, in the East Indies, has written a very affecting book on this subject, which he calls, "The Suttee's Cry to Britain," in which he shows that, in ten years, six thousand six hundred and thirty-two widows perished this way. Now, suppose each of these was the mother of two little children, which is not too much to suppose, then there would be thirteen thousand two hundred and sixty-four helpless orphans left, without father and mother, to the mercy of those who, from bad motives, urged their mothers to destroy themselves.

The following lines, copied from a Calcutta paper, are designed to represent the sorrow of a little orphan who had followed her mother, and seen her burned, and was still weeping over her ashes:—

Upon a woody bank I roam'd at eve,
Close to the Ganges,* gliding stilly on;
And through a glade the sun's last beams I saw,

* A river in India.

Methodist S. School No 2.

MILK FOR BABES.

"I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able," 1 Cor. iii, 2.

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now," John xvi, 12.

1. Who is the Maker of all things?

The Almighty God, who reigns on high:
He form'd the earth, he spread the sky,
And fashion'd in their various forms
Angels and men, and beasts and worms.

2. Did this great God make you?

I am the creature of the Lord:
He made me by his powerful word:
This body, in each curious part,
Was wrought by his unfailing art:
From him my noble spirit came,
My soul a spark of heavenly flame.

3. Wherein does your soul differ from your body?

'Tis that by which my body lives,
Which thinks, and hopes, and joys or grieves,
And must in heaven or hell remain,
When flesh is turn'd to dust again.

4. What then should you consider as your chief end, and the principal business of your life?

Sure it consists in this alone,
That God, my Maker, may be known:
So known that I may love him still,
And form my actions by his will.

5. How has God been pleased to make his will known?

The sacred volume of his word
Reveals the counsels of the Lord:
In that bless'd book, and there alone
He makes his will to mortals known.

6. Why is the Bible better than all other books?

God's kindest thoughts are here express'd,
Able to make us wise and bless'd;
The doctrines are divinely true,
Fit for reproof and comfort too.

7. What is the Bible principally designed to teach?

What our Almighty Maker is,
And what's the way our God to please.

8. What is God?

God is a Spirit, just and wise,
And though unseen by mortal eyes,
Present where'er his creatures dwell,
Thro' earth and sea, thro' heaven and hell.

9. In what relation does God stand to you?

He made, and he preserves me still,
And keeps me safe from every ill;
His hand my daily wants supplies;
His ear is open to my cries;
And sure 'tis fit my soul should know
He is my Lord and Sovereign too.

10. In what state were our first parents created?

Holy and happy while they stood
Obedient to the will of God.

11. Did they continue in this state?

Deceived by subtle snares of hell,
Adam, our head, our father, fell,
When Satan, in the serpent hid,
Proposed the fruit that God forbid.

12. Have all other persons suffered by Adam's disobedience?

He, by his fall, has brought disgrace,
Ruin, and death, on all his race.

13. What evil effects do you experience from it?

My body weak, and dark my mind
To good averse, to sin inclined.

14. Has the sinfulness of your heart shown itself in your conduct?

Yes! I have sinn'd against the Lord,
I own, in thought, in deed, in word;
And justly might be sent to hell,
In endless misery to dwell.

15. Is there any hope of salvation for sinners such as you are?

Bless'd be the Lord, his pard'ning grace,
To sinners of our fallen race,
The glorious gospel doth proclaim,
In an exalted Saviour's name.

16. Who is the Saviour of sinners?

JESUS, IMMANUEL, all divine,
In him his Father's glories shine;
He's Jesus and Jehovah too,
And every knee to him shall bow.

17. Did this glorious person condescend to take our nature upon him?

Yes! though he reigns above the sky,
The Son of God, the Lord most high,
He in an humble virgin's womb,
A feeble infant did become;
A stable was his lodging made,
And the rude manger was his bed.

18. Did any remarkable circumstances attend his entrance into our world?

Angels descending to the earth,
Announce the young Redeemer's birth;
Simeon and Anna both proclaim
The sacred babe, and bless his name;
While eastern sages from afar,
Directed by an unknown star,
With joy the infant Saviour greet,
And pay their homage at his feet.

19. How did Christ appear when he grew up?

Growing in life he still was seen
Humble, laborious, poor, and mean:
The Son of God, from year to year,
Did as a carpenter appear.

20. Did he act as a prophet, or teacher of mankind?

He did; and with that kind intent
Through towns and villages he went;
And, by the miracles he wrought,
Confirm'd the heavenly truths he taught.

21. What miracles were wrought by Jesus Christ in the course of his ministry?

The blind beheld him, and the ear,
Which had been deaf, his voice could hear;
The dumb his praises speak; the lame
Leap like a hart, and bless his name:
The winds and waves his voice obey:
Death and the grave resign their prey:
Sickness confess'd his healing hand,
And devils fled at his command.

22. Did he set forth and confirm his doctrines by his life?

Yes; in his life the law appears
Drawn out in living characters:
Such virtues in his conduct shine,
As prove his doctrines all divine.

23. Did Jesus Christ atone for our sins by his death?

To save our souls from pains unknown,
He freely offer'd up his own;
While justice on his sacred head
The weight of our transgressions laid;
That sinners, who condemned stood,
Might find salvation in his blood.

24. Were the sufferings and death of the Son of God necessary for our salvation?

If God's own Son would sinners save,
He must be humbled to the grave;
That so a pard'ning God might show
What vengeance to our crimes was due.

25. What kind of death did Jesus suffer for our sins?

Nail'd to the cross with tort'ring smart,
While anguish rack'd his tender heart,

See, by the hands of wicked men,
The Lord of life and glory slain!

26. What sort of treatment did he receive during his sufferings?

The barb'rous throng, the cruel priests,
Around him stood like savage beasts!
The glorious suff'rer they deride,
And mock the pangs in which he died.

27. Did any extraordinary events attend his death?

The sun withdrew his wonted light,
And wrapt the earth in shades of night;
The earth, as if with terror struck,
Down to its deep foundation shook;
Lo! the centurion cries aloud,
"This surely is the Son of God!"
While the rent rocks, in that dread hour,
And opening graves proclaim his power.

28. Did Jesus rise again from the dead?

In the cold tomb the Saviour lay,
Until the third, the appointed day;
When he triumphantly arose,
Victorious over all his foes:
Proved his recover'd life, and then
Ascended into heaven again.

29. How is Christ engaged for us now he is in heaven?

With glory crown'd, upon his throne,
At the right hand of God set down,
He pleads the merit of his blood,
And rules for all his people's good.

30. What remarkable events took place after the ascension of Christ?

By a commission from the Lord,
The apostles preach'd his sacred word:
Preach'd as that Spirit did inspire,
Which fell from heaven in tongues of fire,
And gave them languages unknown,
That distant lands his grace might own.

31. What success attended the preaching of the gospel?

Nations, that long in darkness lay,
Beheld with joy a glorious day;
Gentiles and Jews together meet,
To worship at the Saviour's feet;
Their former enmity subdued,
And slain by his atoning blood.

32. Is the salvation revealed in the gospel free for the chief of sinners?

Yes! Those who have most guilty been,
If truly humbled for their sin,
When they on Jesus Christ believe,
Pardon and peace from him receive.

33. How are true believers known?

They love the Saviour with their heart,
And from their former sins depart;
Delight to read and hear his word,
And keep the statutes of the Lord.

34. Can you change your own heart when you please?

It is not in my power, I own,
To melt this stubborn heart of stone;
My evil passions to subdue;
And my depraved soul renew.

35. How then can this change be made?

God, by his Spirit, must impart
A penitent believing heart;
Bestow the grace of faith and love,
And fix the mind on things above.

36. Have you any encouragement in the word of God to seek unto him for this great blessing?

This most important gift of Heaven,
To those who ask and seek, is given:
Then be it my immediate care,
With importunity of prayer,
To seek it in a Saviour's name,
Who will not turn my hopes to shame.

37. What will become of your soul when your body dies?

To distant climes, and seats unknown,
My naked spirit must be gone;
To God its Maker must return,
And ever joy, or ever mourn:
No room for penitence and prayer,
No farther preparation there
Can e'er be made: the thought is vain,
My state unalter'd must remain.

38. Where will the wicked go when they leave the world?

The dust returns to dust again;
The soul, in agonies of pain,
Ascends to God; not there to dwell,
But hears her doom, and sinks to hell.

39. What will be the state of the righteous at the hour of death?

They die in Jesus, and are bless'd;
From suff'ring, sin, and pain released,
To dwell for ever in his sight,
In perfect knowledge and delight.

40. Will the dead rise again?

When the archangel's trump shall sound,
And shake the air, and cleave the ground,
The sleeping nations of the dead
At once shall quit their dusty bed:
Bone to its kindred bone shall cleave,
And, clothed in flesh, new life receive.

41. Will there be a general resurrection both of the just and the unjust?

Both saints and sinners, on that day,
The awful summons must obey:
But O! what different marks they bear,
Of transport some, and some of fear;
When marshall'd in the Judge's sight,
These to the left, those to the right;
That they may that last sentence hear,
Which shall their final state declare!

42. What will Jesus Christ say to those on his right hand?

Come, blessed souls, that kingdom share,
My Father did for you prepare
Ere earth was founded; come and reign
Where endless life and joy remain.

43. What will he say to the wicked?

Depart, depart from me, ye cursed;
Ye have no portion with the just:
To those eternal burnings go,
Whose pangs the rebel angels know.

44. Must you also stand before the judgment seat of Christ?

Yes! I must at his bar appear,
I must this solemn sentence hear,
As I'm with saints or sinners placed,
"Depart, ye cursed," or, "Come, ye bless'd;"
For me the fruits of glory grow,
Or hell awaits my fall below.

45. After repeating such truths, what should be your constant prayer?

O that the gracious Lord on high
Would condescend to hear my cry,
His Spirit and his grace impart,
And work repentance in my heart:
Give me to know my sins forgiven,
And fit me for the joys of heaven;
That when I see the Judge descend,
I, in that Judge, may see my friend.

THE END.

As o'er the golden tide their radiance stream'd
I heard a fretful cry of infant wail,
And paused to listen,—when these words I caught:
"Mother! mother! O my dearest mother!"
I hurried onward to the sandy waste
That edged the water. On the ground there sat,
(Near to a heap of ashes mould'ring drear,)
Weary and desolate, a little child:
One tiny hand a drooping flower held fast;
The other wiped away the scalding tears
That from her dim black eyes ran trickling down,
As on the ashy heap she gazed intent,
Repeating still her cry of infant wail,
"Mother! mother! O my dearest mother!"
"Stranger!" exclaim'd an aged peasant near,
"The story of that orphan soon is told:
Child of my child, her father paid the debt
Which awful nature claims, nor reck'd his babe,
Who deem'd him sleeping in a heavy sleep:—
'And wont you wake, my father?' she would say,
'And wont you speak, nor take me on your knee?'
The Brahmin came,—a garland in his hand,
And hung it round the victim mother's neck;
And then the living with the dead went forth,
Where wood and fire, as meet, convenient lay:
The child her mother follow'd, laughing still,
Or skipp'd before her, sportive as a lamb,
Or grasp'd the hand, whose soft caress was life.
At last the parent stoop'd, and kiss'd the child;
And as she kiss'd her, down a truant tear

Trickled away; and from her quivering lips
The pangs she spoke not breathed upon her child.
A quick presentiment appear'd to cast
Its instant gloom upon the little one;
Unto her mother's bosom fast she clung,
And sobb'd, and wept. The mother, soothing, placed
Yon flower, now faded, in her infant hand.
The frail pledge remains; but O, the giver,—
One last long kiss she gave, and tore away!
And then the pile she mounted.
Her infant fain would follow; but we held
The little struggler, while her piercing cries
In vain reach'd her, who soon could hear no more.
'Come back, my mother! mother! mother! mother!'
The din of direful discord rose, and smoke
Ascended blackly through the sunny air;
The crowd dispersed, but still the babe remains,
And has remain'd since that dread morning hour,
Weeping, and gazing for her mother there;
And nothing finds but loneliness and ashes.—
Mark the sad wildness of her young despair,
As on that ashy heap her gaze is fix'd,
With bitter tears and thick convulsive sobs:
And hark again; her cry of infant wail,
'Mother! mother! O my dearest mother!'"